

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2156
EXDIS
E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PFOR PINT CSCE SHUM UR US
SUBJECT: SOVIET CRACKDOWN AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT:
STATUS REPORT

REF: MOSCOW 2003

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PROMINENT HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST VALENTIN TURCHIN WAS HARASSED AND ISSUED AN OFFICIAL WARNING FEBRUARY 14. PERSONAL CAR OF EMBOFF WHO COVERS HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT WAS DAMAGED NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 12. FORMAL CHARGES HAVE NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED AGAINST ORLOV, GINZBURG AND RUDENKO. END SUMMARY.

2. KGB ISSUED A STERN WARNING TO VALENTIN TURCHIN, CHAIRMAN OF THE SOVIET CHAPTER OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, EARLY EVENING OF FEBRUARY 14. TWO PLAINCLOTHESMEN STOPPED TURCHIN NEAR HIS HOME AND TOLD HIM TO JOIN THEM IN NEARBY AUTHOMOBILE. THEY REFUSED TO SHOW TURCHIN THEIR IDENTIFICATION PAPERS, NOR WOULD THEY SAY WHERE THEY WERE TAKING HIM. AFTER A TWENTY-MINUTE RIDE, THE CAR STOPPED AT MOSCOW'S LEFORTOVO PRISON. THEN THE CAR TOOK TURCHIN AND HIS STILL SILENT COMPANIONS TO THE KGB HEADQUARTERS IN TURCHIN'S RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT. THERE A KGB OFFICER READ AN OFFICIAL WARNING: TURCHIN WAS ENGAGIN IN ACTIVITIES HARMFUL TO THE SOVIET STATE,
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 02156 151426Z

BY SPREADING SLANDEROUS IDEAS AND BY "CONTACT WITH FOREIGNERS."

3. TURCHIN WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS HIS "LAST WARNING" THAT WHILE HE MIGHT BE COUNTING ON ARTICLE 190 (OF THE RSFSR CRIMINAL CODE, WHICH SPECIFIES UP TO THREE YEARS DEPRIVATION OF FREEDOM FOR SPREADING ANTI-SOVIET

IDEAS) HE SHOULD NOT FORGET ARTICLE 70 (SPREADING ANTI-SOVIET IDEAS WITH SUBVERSIVE INTENT, PUNISHABLE BY THREE TO TEN YEARS IN PRISON). THE KGB OFFICIAL REFERRED TO A DECREE OF DECEMBER 21, 1972, WHICH TURCHIN ASSUMES IS A SECRET DECREE. THE MEETING ENDED WITH THE KGB OFFICIAL SAYING "YOU ARE FREE, FOR NOW."

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SPECIFIC CHARGES STILL HAVE NOT BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST GINZBURG, ORLOV AND RUDENKO.

5. IN WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE OF FIRST SECRETARY RICHARD COMBS, WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT, WAS MALICIOUSLY DAMAGED DURING THE NIGHT OF FEBRUARY 12-13. WHILE THE CAR WAS PARKED IN A WELL LIGHTED BUT UNGUARDED AREA NEAR COMBS' APARTMENT, UNKNOWN PERONS SNAPPED OFF A WINDSHIELD WIPER ARM, BENT THE OTHER ARM, DENTED THE SIDE OF THE CAR AND RIPPED OFF A CHROME STRIP. OTHER DIPLOMATIC CARS PARKED NEARBY WERE NOT DAMAGED. EMBASSY PRESENTED MFA WITH WRITTEN PROTEST OF INCIDENT FEBRUARY 14.

6. COMMENT. WITH ORLOV AND GINZBURG ARRESTED, AND APART FROM SAKHAROV, TURCHIN HAS RECENTLY BECOME THE MOST PROMINENT AND ACTIVE FIGURE IN THE MOSCOW HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. HIS APARTMENT HAS NOT BEEN RECENTLY SEARCHED, ALTHOUGH THIS MAY HAPPEN IF HE MAINTAINS HIS CURRENT LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT MAN WHO HAS EXTENSIVE CONTACTS AMONG THE WESTERN PRESS CORPS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 02156 151426Z

HERE, HE HAS NOW BECOME SOMETHING OF AN UNOFFICIAL "FIELD-COMMANDER" OF THE LOOSELY-ORGANIZED MOVEMENT. THE AUTHORITIES MUST REALIZE THAT HE IS A KEY FIGURE; THEY UNDOUBTEDLY WILL KEEP A VERY CLOSE EYE ON HIM AND MAY WELL ARREST HIM IF HE DOES NOT--IN THEIR EYES--HEED THEIR FEBRUARY 14 WARNING.

TOON

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION INSERTED PER MR. PERITO, S/S-O

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